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## CIVIL SERVICE

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, MAR 12, 2014

### **Dinesh Sharma named additional secretary in DEA**

**SUMMARY**Dinesh Sharma, a 1983-batch IAS officer from the Kerala cadre, has been named additional secretary in the economic affairs department.

Dinesh Sharma, a 1983-batch IAS officer from the Kerala cadre, has been named additional secretary in the economic affairs department. Sharma is the principal secretary to Kerala CM Oommen Chandy. He replaces Shaktikanta Das, who took over as secretary, fertilisers, in the ministry of chemicals and fertilisers.

STATESMAN, MAR 14, 2014

### **Good as far as it goes: MEA official**

New Delhi, 13 March: India today tread cautiously on the dismissal of visa fraud charges against diplomat Ms Devyani Khobragade calling it “good as far as it goes”. “We have seen the judgment related to the indictment of January 9. It is good as far as it goes,” the official spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs said. He said the lawyers will meet to “examine it carefully before we are able to respond substantially and in more detail”. Ms Khobragade, who was India’s deputy consul-general in New York, was arrested on December 12, outside her children’s school. Her subsequent handcuffing and strip search led to a straining of India-US relationship. But of late the Indian government has quietly toned down its previous aggressive attitude towards the USA. Sources in the government maintain that India wants the US-India relationship to be back on track and the Khobragade incident to be treated in isolation. What has also embarrassed the MEA is the fact that Ms Khobragade herself has openly flouted the service rules. Her husband and children all hold US passports which is in violation of the IFS rules that require a foreign spouse to acquire Indian citizenship after the marriage. Sources in the Home Ministry add that while it requires a stay of 10 years in India for a person to be granted Indian citizenship, in the case of diplomats spouse this is usually waived. Sources maintain that Ms. Khobragade s husband has not applied for Indian citizenship. The MEA has chosen to play it silent on her behaviour.

Also, sources in the government confirm that Ms. Khobragade has been attending various functions where she is being ‘honoured’ for her stand against the US which is again in violation of the service rules. Political sources maintain that she and her father are also trying hard to get a ticket to contest the upcoming Lok Sabha polls. Ms. Khobragade has won dismissal of the indictment against her for visa fraud, with a U.S. judge ruling she had full diplomatic immunity. However, prosecutors are not barred from bringing new charges in future.

U.S. District Judge Shira Scheindlin said in her 14-page order that “it is undisputed” that Ms. Khobragade acquired full diplomatic immunity at 5:47 p.m. on January 8, after the U.S. State Department approved her accreditation as a counselor to India’s mission to the United Nations.

While the indictment was returned on January 9, Ms. Khobragade had the immunity till she departed from the U.S. for India on the evening of January 9 and so the prosecutors cannot proceed with the current indictment. SIMRAN SODHI

[HINDU, MAR 12, 2014](#)

### **UPSC declares Civil Services exam results**

The results of the Civil Services (Mains) examinations were declared on Tuesday by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).

The written exams were held in December of last year.

The successful candidates will be called for a personality test for selection to Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS), Indian Police Service (IPS) and other Group A and B Central services, said a release by the Ministry of Personnel.

Personality tests are likely to commence from April.

“The date and timing for the personality test is being intimated to the qualified candidates individually,” it said.

Candidates will be required to produce original certificates in support of their claims pertaining to age, educational qualifications, community, physical handicap (if any) along with other documents such as questionnaire, attestation form and TA form, etc. at the time of their personality test, the release added.

The formats for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes and physical-handicap certificates and questionnaire, attestation form and TA form, etc. can be downloaded from the UPSC website, it said.

“Mark sheets of the candidates who have not qualified will be put up on the UPSC website within 15 days from the date of publication of the final result [after completion of the personality tests] and will remain available for a period of 60 days,” it added.— PTI

STATESMAN, MAR 10, 2014

**Govt employees seek action against IAS officer**

The Confederation of State Government Employees is going to lodge a complaint with Election Commission (EC) against an IAS officer for physically assaulting a government employee.

Mr Malay Mukhopadhya, general secretary of the confederation, said night guard Jitendra Kumar Tiwari was physically assaulted a few days ago by an IAS officer at the office of the Howrah district magistrate.

Several employees of the Howrah district magistrate office launched demonstration protesting the incident. "Employees of several other district magistrate offices also staged an agitation and submitted deputation demanding legal action against the IAS officer," he said.

Mr Mukhopadhya said they have already spoken to Mr Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, president of West Bengal Pradesh Congress, regarding this matter. Since the state government did not take any action we are going to appeal to the EC. A deputation has been submitted to Governor M K Narayanan," he said, adding the government has to ensure safety and security of its employees.

"The organisation also expressed concern over the arrest of a large number of INTUC leader in false and fabricated cases. Trinamul Congress-led government is also trying to weaken the movement of our organisation," he said.

## DEFENCE, NATIONAL

HINDU, MAR 12, 2014

### Armed forces as a vote bank

CHANDER SUTA DOGRA

As the clamour for a viable system to enable soldiers to vote grows, veteran soldiers have also shed their compunctions and now participate vigorously in electoral processes

**CONNECTING WITH DEMOCRACY:** Many in the armed forces have begun to realise that unless they become a powerful vote bank, politicians will not care for them.—

Days before the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government announced the “One Rank One Pension” policy for defence personnel, Pratap Singh Bajwa, the Congress MP from Gurdaspur, broke the news to a few ex-servicemen in Chandigarh. Once it was formally announced, a beaming Mr. Bajwa stood beside Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi when he came to meet grateful ex-servicemen.

However, few know that in the last five years Mr. Bajwa has raised 157 questions relating to defence personnel and their problems. During his election campaign in 2009, he went to army cantonments in Punjab where he promised serving defence personnel that he would take up their issues if they voted for him. In the run-up to that election, which came in the midst of intense dissatisfaction in the armed forces over the Sixth Pay Commission recommendations, some ex-servicemen’s organisations in Punjab had managed to get 15,000 defence personnel registered as voters in their place of posting.

Of the 13,345 votes polled from these cantonments, Mr. Bajwa is believed to have got some 11,000. He eventually won by a margin of 8,000 votes. If it had not been for the *fauji* votes, he may well have lost that election.

Mr. Bajwa is the early bird who recognised the potential of the defence community — serving and retired — as a constituency and worked on it. The others, even in his own party have only just woken up to the reality, evident in the scramble now among political parties to woo *faujis*.

#### Right to vote

In the last few months, these Punjab-based ex-servicemen organisations have managed to get around one lakh serving defence personnel registered as voters in the three major cantonments of Jalandhar, Amritsar and Ferozepur. Brig. (retd.) G.S. Ghuman of All India Veteran’s Core Group (AIVCG) said that though the Election Commission (EC) does not have a system to register servicemen, wherever non-governmental organisations or local formation commanders are proactive they have been able to get them enrolled. In Pune and Jalandhar, commanding officers of some units are encouraging soldiers under their command to get themselves enrolled, a development that has not gone unnoticed.

For almost four decades, soldiers have not been able to exercise their right to vote effectively because, unlike the civilian population, they are not allowed to register as regular voters at their place of posting. A government of India rule says that they can be registered as regular voters only if they have been residing in a station with their families for at least three years. Civilians on the other hand are required to be residents of a constituency for only six months to become eligible to enrol as voters. A Supreme Court ruling in 1971 upheld the right of armed forces personnel to vote at their place of posting, but there is no mechanism in place for the Election Commission to register defence personnel in cantonments where they are ordinarily resident. Enrolment drives always bypass military areas. The wife of a service voter also faces hurdles in exercising her franchise as she can be registered only where her husband is posted.

The two methods available to them — of a postal ballot and proxy vote — do not work on the ground. The lapse did not trouble the apolitical soldiers much, for whom elections are a periodic event that take place outside the cantonments.

#### Turning point

Things changed when the armed forces felt short-changed by the Sixth Central Pay Commission recommendations. Organisations like the Indian Ex-Servicemen Movement (IESM) formed in 2008 gathered strength as they lobbied for a better deal for soldiers. Many in the armed forces began to realise that “unless they become a powerful vote bank for all types of elections in the country, the politicians will not care” for them.

So, efforts were made even in 2009 at several cantonments and some naval bases too to register servicemen at their place of posting. Last October, then chairman of Chiefs of Staff Committee, Air Chief Marshal (retd.) N.A.K. Browne petitioned the Election Commission to enrol soldiers as general voters. Now, service headquarters actively encourage personnel to register themselves. In the recent Delhi Assembly elections, navy men posted in Delhi got voting cards.

Rajya Sabha MP Rajeev Chandrasekhar has filed a special leave petition in the Supreme Court to do away with the stipulation that soldiers should be residing in a station with their spouse for three years or more. His nationwide campaign to get voting rights for the armed forces has struck a chord in a wide section of society.

Last week, the Supreme Court issued notices to the Election Commission and the Ministry of Defence on Mr. Chandrasekhar’s petition. The outcome of this petition — which originated with the Chandigarh-based Brig. Ghuman — is being watched with interest. If it succeeds, it will have far-reaching implications not only in facilitating over 23 lakh serving defence and paramilitary personnel to exercise their franchise but also in the way political parties approach them.

As the clamour for a viable system to enable soldiers to vote grows, veteran soldiers have also shed their compunctions and now participate vigorously in electoral processes at all levels. Politics is no longer the distant phenomena it once used to be. One only has to

look at the example of Gen.(retd.) V.K. Singh joining the BJP recently with 50 ex-servicemen in tow, cementing the new found enthusiasm among *faujis* to participate in democratic processes.

It is not without significance therefore that in Punjab and Haryana, where there are large military cantonments as also a huge ex-servicemen population, the State governments have announced a slew of benefits for servicemen in the last couple of months. In February, Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal laid the foundation stone of a war heroes memorial at Amritsar and used the occasion to announce several sops. Within days, Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda announced a steep hike in financial aid for gallantry award winners.

The most pleasant of them all, however, has been the Central government's decision to implement the "One Rank One Pension" policy. The same government which was indifferent when ex-servicemen took to the streets in 2010 demanding "equal pension for each rank," has now overruled the Defence Ministry's contention that the policy is not "legally or administratively" possible and rushed to appease the armed forces. By all accounts, the 2014 Lok Sabha election will be a watershed in the democratic empowerment of the armed forces.

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For almost four decades, soldiers have been not been able to vote because they are not allowed to register as regular voters at their place of posting



## DEMOCRACY

**STATESMAN, MAR 10, 2014**

**Opinion**

**Democratic pluralism**

Though a firm believer in procedural democracy, Robert Dahl recognised the strength of the argument of the substantivists that democracy cannot exist unless the ‘collective decision-making process’ yields ‘desirable results’ ~ SUBRATA MUKHERJEE and SUSHILA RAMASWAMY

Robert A Dahl (1915-2014) is the foremost proponent of democratic theory and practice in the context of mass societies of today. In defining democracy, he takes into consideration four aspects ~ (1) what constitutes people in democracy; (2) problem of size or scale; (3) problem of pluralism; and (4) consequences for democracy, liberty and equality in the context of an alternative scheme of change or scale in economy. His concern with democratic practice begins in his seminal work, *Who Governs, Democracy and Power in an American city* (1961). The focus is on New Haven, where he defends the politics of the USA where a multitudes of groups compete for influence rather than power being concentrated in the business elite. Though a firm believer in procedural democracy, he recognised the strength of the argument of the substantivists that democracy cannot exist unless the ‘collective decision-making process’ yields ‘desirable results’.

Dahl, like JS Mill and de Tocqueville, justifies democracy in terms of the capacity of democratic systems to promote autonomy as it is premised on the fact that people are qualified to govern themselves. He distinguishes between two types of moral development that he believes are promoted within democracies. The first is to gain “a more mature sense of responsibility for one’s actions, a broader awareness of the others affected by one’s actions, a greater willingness to reflect on and take into account the consequences of one’s actions for others”. The second is the concept of autonomy as self-determination ~ ‘lacking personal autonomy, one simply could not live under rules of one’s own choosing; as a result, one would be neither self-determining nor morally autonomous and to that extent could not be a moral person’.

The salient feature of democracy is its acceptance of the foundational notion of human equality, and treating persons as having equal moral worth. It means equal intrinsic worth of all human beings in making collective decisions and “the good or interests of each person should be given equal consideration”.

Dahl criticises Mills’ analysis in the *Power Elite* (1956), a vehement critique of the Dahl-Lipset thesis of democratic pluralism because of insufficient data. He notes that a theory, which could not be converted to empirical evidence, could not claim to be a scientific theory. The burden of such a proof has to be provided by the theorist and not by his critics. The argument that A is more powerful than B is both ambiguous and meaningless

without specificity. No comparison is actually possible when two actors are performing different and not identical functions. Any ideal of complete political equality is utopian and the absence of political equality does not mean the existence of a ruling elite.

Dahl specifies the exact nature of pluralist democracies and argues that if competitive electoral systems are characterised by a multiplicity of groups who have strong views on different subjects, then democratic rights will be protected and extreme political inequalities would be certainly avoided other than those guaranteed by law and constitution. Second, there is empirical evidence to suggest that the USA and Britain fulfil these conditions. Dahl is convinced that power is distributed and shared by many groups in society representing diverse interests and they defend their particular interests through the government, creating a proclivity towards 'competitive equilibrium' that benefits the citizens in the long run. At the minimum, 'democratic theory is concerned with processes by which ordinary citizens exert a relatively high degree of control over leaders'. This control is maintained by two methods ~ regular elections and political competition among parties, groups and individuals. He dismisses the concerns of Madison, Mill and de Tocqueville about the tyranny of the majority as misplaced, for a tyrannous majority is impossible because elections express the preferences of divergent competitive groups rather than the wishes of a strong majority. He agrees with Madison about the existence of factions and feels that it is possible to deal with its effects rather than eliminate them. Madison's justification for not attacking factionalism is that it would be improper and wicked, and that the government's first objective is the protection of human diversity which makes possible for different kinds and degrees of property ~ a fundamental right.

Polyarchy or pluralist democracy, Dahl's most notable formulation, is a rule by a series of minorities, some self-interested and others disinterested, within the boundaries stipulated by consensus with none being able to dominate but all having a space for their manoeuvre and bargaining. This emphasis on consensus is in contrast to Schumpeter's view of democratic politics as managed ultimately by competing elites. The pluralist system is decentralised, one that attempts to arrive at compromise rather than truth. The competition among groups is a safeguard of democracy. Democracy does not establish the sovereignty of the majority but a rule by 'multiple minority oppositions'. The competition among groups establishes the democratic nature of the system. In Dahl's reckoning, the difference between dictatorship and democracy for Dahl is the difference between 'government by a minority' and 'government by minorities'. The greater the presence of competing interest groups, the more secure is democracy. Furthermore, he points out that the change in size from the city-states to modern nation-states inevitably moves from monist to a pluralist democracy. This change in scale is crucial to understanding present-day democracies. In the modern context, the very essence of democracy is realised by polyarchy that stipulates the presence of a large number of organisations and associations, which enjoy relative autonomy both in relationship to one

another as also with regard to governmental power and jurisdiction. The institution of polyarchy distinguishes a democratic regime from an authoritarian one.

The preconditions for a functioning polyarchy are: consensus on the rules of procedure, consensus on the range of policy options and consensus on the legitimate scope of political activity, which act as a buffer against oppressive rule. The greater the level of consensus the more secure is democracy. A society enjoys protection from tyranny in non-constitutional provisions. It is not as if Dahl does not accord importance to such principles as separation of powers and the system of checks and balances. However, the importance of constitutional rules for the successful development of democracy is less compared to non-constitutional ones. Dahl is convinced that democracy is safe for it brings about moderation, agreement and maintains social peace if the social preconditions are secure.

In A Preface to Economic Democracy (1985), Dahl addresses the economic sources of inequality in political resources, mainly 'ownership and control of firms' which contribute to the creation of differences among citizens in terms of wealth, income, status, skills, information, control over information and propaganda, and access to political leaders. These differences can lead to inequalities among citizens in their capacities and opportunities. Contrary to Madison he argues against the perception that property is a fundamental right and devotes half the book to describing a 'self-governing equal order', a kind of workers self-management and defends it realistically to achieve economic egalitarianism that would be conducive to democracy.

Dahl is opposed to both anarchistic extremism and to a conception of politics ruled by the well educated and trained elite. A marked preference for groups and less towards institutions is an important lacuna in Dahl's democratic formulation, and in this sense he defies the contemporary emphasis of new institutionalists. He welcomed the democratic expansion during the last quarter of the twentieth century but was skeptical if any one nation could effectively realise all the democratic goals. But he was optimistic about his vision of political equality in a situation 'where people may live in peace and respect each other's intrinsic equality and jointly seek the best possible life'.

## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC TIMES, MAR 10, 2014

**India Vision 2020: Growth and Welfare**

**Arvind Virmani**

Elections are still six months away, but the election battle has been joined. More importantly, parties are formulating their manifestos and trying to refine a vision that they can present to the voters. It is therefore timely for those of us with a national (as against party) perspective and some knowledge and experience of economic development, growth and governance, to put forward our views for the consideration of the contending parties. In the first of a series of articles, we start by putting the critical importance of economic growth to people's Welfare in historical perspective.

The welfare of the average Indian was about the same as the welfare of the average citizen of the World at the peak of the Pala (Northern) and Chola (Southern) empires (1000-1200). This was followed by a period of invasion, wars and political consolidation (Sultanate, Mughals), during which the real income of the average Indian fell to 80% of the average World citizen by 1820. The gap between the welfare of the average Indian and the World widened dramatically during colonial rule, reducing the average Indian to pathetic poverty by the time of Independence. In 1950 the real income of the average Indian (per capita GDP at PPP) was reduced to a quarter (1/4th) of that of the average citizen of the World. The British colonialists ensured through a combination of neglect and design, that the industrial revolution did not revolutionize India's economy. The fruits of the industrial revolution, which originated in Great Britain and propelled it to global super-power in 19th century, were denied to India.

The gap continued to widen during the first 30 years of Independence, to reach its widest point of 85 per cent points in 1980. During this period economic policy was driven by the 'Indian version of socialism,' sometimes incompletely referred to as "Fabian" or "Nehruvian Socialism", as Shrimati Indira Gandhi contributed to its negative development from 1966 to 1977. This misplaced approach continued the Indian people's descent into abject poverty, to 14.5% of World average. In 1980s Mrs. Indira Gandhi abandoned her failed policies, accelerating India's per capita income growth above the World average and began to close the Welfare gap.

The economic reforms and liberalization of the Indian economy, first in the 1980s and then further in the 1990s, has had unambiguous benefits for the Indian people. The welfare of the average Indian had increased to about a third (1/3rd) of that of the average World citizen by 2010. The rate at which the welfare gap has been closing has accelerated over this period (1980 to 2010), with the rate of catch up during the 2000s being about three times that during the eighties. The highest average 10 year growth rate of per capita GDP at PPP was 6.2% in decade 2002 to 2011. These facts contradict assertions based on selective use of comparator countries and time periods. However, this acceleration had within it the seeds of its own hubris. Because of widespread growth complacency and consequent mismanagement, growth collapsed in 2011 and the welfare

gap has started widening again. Unless the new government formed after the election, takes decisive corrective action, the gap may continue to widen in 2014.

It is very important to understand that it is this gap between our per capita GDP (at PPP) and the World, that, (a) categorizes us as a (relatively) poor country, (b) results in our having much greater ratios of poor and near-poor people than other countries, and (c) Is the primary cause of the gap between our social welfare indicators and those of better off countries. In 2012, Vietnam with a per capita GDP at PPP of 30% of the World average was two ranks below India at 32% while Pakistan with 24% of World average is 8 ranks below. On the upper side are Philippines (37%), Indonesia (42%) and Sri Lanka (52%), still poor, but with their “Aam Admi” much better-off than ours.

The fundamental objective of any Indian government must be to close the welfare gap of the Indian people with the rest of the World, in the shortest possible time. This objective is inseparable from the objective of sustaining fast growth. What is a realistic target to aim for by 2020-2025? The next Indian government should aim to raise the per capita GDP level of India to 43% of global average by 2020 and 54% by 2025 (from 32% today). This will require a restoration of per capita growth to 6.5% within three years and a sustaining of this growth rate till 2025. This will generate economic opportunities and jobs for youth and begin to restore the welfare and dignity of the average Indian to the level of the average World citizen. We will explore other elements of the broad vision in subsequent articles.

The author is former Chief Economic Advisor, MOF and ED, IMF. He currently heads Chintanlive.org.

## EDUCATION

ECONOMIC TIMES, MAR 10, 2014

### **Undisputed improvement in Gujarat school education**

**Bibek Debroy**

When my sons were children, I used to play a game with them called 20 questions. Most people will have heard of it, or played it. It's not a terribly intellectual game. Once they grew up a bit, they lost interest. Asking a barrage of questions also lacks intellectual depth. It is like shotguns that were once used to shoot birds and small game. There is the hope that something sticks somewhere. But in the process, since power of the burning charge is distributed among pellets, the energy of any specific ball is low. You may need to aim less carefully, but you also lose force. I prefer one question at a time, so that you can probe better. Hence, let me focus on school education in Gujarat, something that has been in the news recently. I don't want to bring in malnutrition among cattle, even if they are wandering around the schools. There are assorted indicators for evaluating state of school education and they don't necessarily show similar trends. The one that's been in the news is of single-teacher schools. How can a single teacher teach 5 classes? Fair point.

There is a new sampling technique that does the rounds now. Let me illustrate. I went out and asked the first 3 people I met whether they would vote for Congress in the general elections. All three said no. Am I now right in deducing that the Congress will get no votes in the general elections? That would be patently stupid. The sample isn't large enough. That's precisely the reason one uses sample surveys and censuses. One doesn't arrive at conclusions on the basis of chatting to a few people, attractive enough though that anecdotal stuff may seem to be. There is a decent database I can access right here in Delhi. It's called DISE and is produced by NUEPA. Unless I hope to get better power supply in Gujarat to access the Net, the visit to Gujarat isn't quite necessary. The latest DISE tables are for 2011-12. For Gujarat, this covered 40,943 schools. I prefer to depend on this, because I can't hope to visit 40,943 schools personally. What does this tell us about single-teacher schools? Schools are also divided into primary, upper primary, secondary, higher secondary. They don't have the same numbers. Perhaps we should take the "all schools" indicator. For Gujarat, in 2011-12, the percentage of single-teacher schools was 0.81%. You can check this out yourself. It is Table 1.30 in the analytical tables for 2011-12.

Is 0.81% good, bad or ugly? The answer depends a bit on the perspective. The all-India comparable figure was 8.31%. But Gujarat is supposed to be a State where governance has improved. Why should we even have 0.81%? Fair point again. Therefore, let's check out the similar analytical tables from DISE in 2004. This is now Table 2.32. In that year, in Gujarat, 2.73% of "all schools" had no teachers and 5.04% of "all schools" were single-teacher. 5.04% plus 2.73% is 7.77%. From 7.77% in 2004, it has come down to 0.81% in 2011-12. Sure, that 0.81% should also have dwindled to zero. However, given these numbers, I find it difficult to argue that there have been no improvements. This was only about the single-teacher indicator, picked by critics. But regardless of the indicator,

you will find improvements. DISE also computes an Educational Development Index (EDI), aggregated across a range of indicators. But since that comes out with a time-lag, let me ignore that. You will find it on the website.

Finally, let me leave you with the following. Drop-out rates are a pretty decent indicator. At what level of education, shall we pick the drop-out rate? Let's say primary education, defined as Standards I to V. Boys or girls? Perhaps both. In 2011-12, for that segment, the drop-out rate for girls was 2.08% and that for boys was 2.05%. In 2002-03, it was 19.14% for girls and 19.08% for boys. But like I said, one can always talk to the 2.08% of girls who dropped out and the 2.05% of boys who dropped out and create a song and dance out of it.

INDIAN EXPRESS, MAR 14, 2014

**Aptitude certificates will replace character certificates soon: Modi**

The age-old tradition of schools issuing character certificates will soon be replaced by aptitude certificates in Gujarat, said Chief Minister Narendra Modi during his inaugural address of the National Education Summit held at Gandhinagar on Friday.

“We are trying to bring in a little change to the age-old tradition, perhaps introduced during the British rule. When we leave a school, we are given a character certificate and wherever we go we show the same character certificate. Ironically, none of those accepting it understands its requirement or utility,” he said.

“I have made this suggestion known to my colleagues and work is in progress regarding this. There should be a facility, where children will undergo regular observation and monitoring while in school. With the help of technology, their daily routine and family members will also be put under observation.”

Debunking the existing system of field visits, he said students should be taken to visits to army camps, industries, manufacturing companies. “Do we need to pass a resolution in the Parliament and make a law for this,” Modi said, while addressing representatives from 33 states and Union Territories, including more than 100 vice-chancellors and directors, 84 scholars and more than 1,500 professors and teachers. Over 3,000 students, who attended the event were from outside Gujarat and 200 of them were from 40 countries.

Those who shared the stage with Modi included Delhi University Vice-Chancellor Dinesh Singh, Mumbai Vice-Chancellor Dr Rajan Welukar, Charles Zukoksi provost and executive vice-president for Academic Affairs University of Buffalo, State University of New York, Dr Kishore Singh, who was responsible for the right to education at UNESCO and appointed as special rapporteur on the Right to Education by the UN Human Rights

Council, Italian Ambassador Daniele Mancini and Gujarat Education Minister Bhupendrasinh Chudasama.

**HINDU, MAR 10, 2014**

**UGC plans skill-based courses to improve employability of students**

UGC to initiate Inter-University Centre for training faculty

Expressing concern that 85 per cent of those passing out from engineering colleges were not employable, University Grants Commission (UGC) Vice Chairman H. Devaraj has said the UGC has proposed to introduce new courses for providing skill-based training to the students to make them employable.

Addressing the pearl jubilee celebrations of Mohamed Sathak Engineering College at Kilakarai near here on Saturday, he said the UGC and the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) had made plans to start community courses and skill-based courses for all engineering students.

“We are planning to bring in a lot of skill-based courses and ensure that all the engineering students – Chemical, Electronics and Automobile branches – learn the skills before they passed out from colleges and became employable,” he said.

The UGC, which had taken over all technical institutions in the country from the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) after a Supreme Court order, would introduce National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) and National Vocational Educational Qualification Framework (NVEQF) to provide mobility to the students, Professor Devaraj said.

Under the programmes, students could join engineering colleges and go out after taking a diploma, advanced diploma or degree but come back to continue their studies, he said, adding “we are going to give them the mobility, both horizontally and vertically and help them to go up to Ph.D.”

Opportunities would be given to them and they should understand the subjects and fundamentals besides getting to know some skills, he said.

“During undergraduation, the students should have strong fundamentals, to grow horizontally before they grow vertically and this is the kind of education we are planning,” he said.

The UGC and the MHRD would also roll out Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) or Higher Education Mission on an outlay of Rs.50,000 crore. While the UGC had been allotted Rs.25,000 crore, the MHRD would distribute the balance to self-financing engineering colleges, which had basic parameters and met the performance-based indicators, he said.



As quality human resource was missing in the engineering colleges, the UGC had proposed to create 5,000 posts and the MHRD 1,000 posts and initiate an Inter-University Centre for training the faculty.

“The Colleges should have quality teachers and the students should imbibe something from them,” he emphasised.

## ELECTIONS

**HINDU, MAR 14, 2014**

**The franchise as the fulcrum of democracy**

GARIMELLA SUBRAMANIAM

The demand for the right to vote was only a part of a comprehensive package of measures to emancipate the masses from poverty, exploitation and oppression

Important proposal: The Karachi session of the Indian National Congress in 1931 regarded the affirmation of political equality, encapsulated in the notion of universal adult franchise, as fundamental to the future of total independence.— Photo: THE HINDU ARCHIVES

In the run-up to the polls to elect India's 16th Lok Sabha, pages from the freedom struggle provide some background on why the ballot remains the bedrock of our democracy. It may also tell us something about the reasons why, despite the robust expansion and protection of the practice of political equality, socio-economic inequalities are allowed to persist in post-independence India.

Paradoxically, the Constitution that enshrined universal adult suffrage in the world's largest democracy was drafted by a Constituent Assembly that was composed of members elected by restricted franchise. But then, the demand for universal adult suffrage had been gathering momentum for some decades before independence. The Motilal Nehru report on a draft constitution for free India advocated unlimited adult franchise and equal rights for women. The resolution of the 1931 Karachi session of the Indian National Congress regarded the affirmation of political equality, encapsulated in the notion of universal adult franchise, as fundamental to the future of Purna Swaraj or total independence. Britain had removed the remaining arbitrary restrictions on the exercise of the vote for adults only recently, in 1928. The principle of one man one vote galvanised large sections of the youth behind the anti-colonial struggle. A vindication was the overwhelming victory of the Congress in the 1937 provincial elections, held under limited suffrage based on income and education.

Free India enacted a succession of measures to make the electoral process more participatory, inclusive and transparent from the very first general election of 1952. Foremost among them was the casting of votes by joint electorates to choose representatives from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies. To be sure, there have been recurrent instances in recent years of intimidation of candidates and voters belonging to disadvantaged communities. This scenario, if anything, underscores the need to persist with the policy of reserving a proportion of electoral constituencies as a prerequisite to ensuring adequate representation for them.

Adapting a Westminster style of democracy to domestic conditions called for devising a simple and intelligible medium for political parties to appeal to a predominantly non-

literate voting population. The introduction by the Election Commission, of ballots as well as drop boxes that bear symbols to denote different political parties to voters achieved this end admirably. The most recent measure to empower voters to express a negative opinion against candidates is a further advance in terms of evolving a more transparent election process.

Equally, there are elaborate formalities enjoined upon people's representatives and concomitantly upon the political parties they belong to. The stipulation to furnish information on the conduct of internal party elections may be seen as an explicit expression of the commitment to democratic principles at various levels.

#### Curtailling political defections

The once rampant practice of political defections, that had a detrimental effect on the representative character of popular elections, has been considerably curtailed in recent years. A legislator is now disqualified from membership of a house when he voluntarily gives up membership of a political party, as per the Constitution 52nd Amendment Act. He also forfeits membership when he votes or abstains from voting contrary to the direction of his party.

Recognition of a merger only when backed by at least two-thirds of a legislative party, under the 91st Constitutional Amendment Act, is a further curb on political defections. At the same time, the provision to approve the formation of a new party by some legislators, as well as to allow others not to accept the merger and opt to function as a separate group are important protections of the basic democratic principle of political dissent.

In the context of the 2014 election, it may be relevant to recall that the right to universal adult franchise was not an isolated demand put forward in the 1931 Karachi session of the INC. The proposal was in fact part of a comprehensive package of measures seen as crucial to emancipate the masses from poverty, exploitation and oppression; and thus give substance to the idea of self-rule.

The pledge included the provision of free and compulsory primary education, a living wage, the prohibition of child labour, the promotion of trade union rights and many others. The spirit of the Karachi resolution may be reflected in the constitution of independent India. But the substantial features are mere entries in the non-justiciable directive principles of state policy.

Among them, the goal of realising free and compulsory education within a decade of the commencement of the new Constitution was elevated as a fundamental right in 2002. It was another seven years when an enabling law was enacted in 2009 to guarantee elementary education free of cost for children in the age group of 6-14 years. The employment of children below the age of 14 years was declared a cognisable offence just a year ago, following an amendment to the original law of 1986 on the prohibition of child labour.

Although the law on minimum wages came into force in 1948, the concept of a National Floor Level Minimum Wage was adopted only in 1991. The NFLMW is still neither universally applied, nor is it a statutory provision. Finally, the landmark 2011 report of the High Level Empowered Group constituted by the Planning Commission has recommended the provision of a fully state-funded universal public health care. Many of these measures were initiated after pressure from advocacy and voter groups.

There are, admittedly, many pitfalls in the current electoral system. Its susceptibility to advance narrow and sectarian ends; not to mention the not so insignificant limitations of the first-past-the-post method of election. With the benefit of hindsight however, it is obvious that the franchise remains the fulcrum of Indian democracy. While we may feel justified pride in the relative stability of our democratic institutions, it is time some of these challenges were addressed urgently.

While we may feel justified pride in the relative stability of our democratic institutions, it is time some of these challenges were addressed urgently

HINDU, MAR 14, 2014

### **Government staff in U.P. threaten to exercise NOTA**

ATIQ KHAN

Irked at the non-fulfilment of their demands related to the removal of pay anomalies and the restoration of the old pension scheme — discontinued since 2005 — the Uttar Pradesh Employees' Joint Federation has threatened to use the NOTA (none of the above) option in the Lok Sabha election. Although the federation, an umbrella organisation of about 16 lakh State employees, has been agitating for long, it has failed to get any assurance from the Centre or the State government.

The president of the federation, Hari Kishore Tewari, said on Thursday that the employees had been compelled to take the decision to exercise the NOTA option. The federation was in touch with other employee organisations and would appeal to retired State employees' organisations and associations also to exercise the option.

#### Pension scheme

Outlining the details of the protest, Mr. Tewari and the general secretary of the federation, Shivbaran Singh Yadav, told journalists that for one year they had been agitating for the restoration of the old pension scheme. Opinion of MPs from the State had also been sought. "40 MPs had given in writing that the pension scheme should not be discontinued," Mr. Yadav said.

Condemning what they called "double standards," the federation office-bearers said people's representatives were entitled for pension even if they attended the House for day, but State employees had been deprived of pension benefits. Mr. Tewari flayed the new contributory pension scheme and alleged that it was being thrust upon employees.

STATESMAN, MAR 14, 2014

### **Flying squad to check illegal poll activities**

Siliguri, 13 March: With view to checking illegal activities during the Lok Sabha elections, the administration has introduced 'flying squad, a static surveillance team and a video surveillance team.

Siliguri sub-divisional officer Deepap Priya P said the static surveillance team will be deployed along check posts. According to sources, the flying squad will conduct raids on the basis of information on intimidation, bribery, illegal transport of money etc, and take action accordingly.

Movement of vehicles for campaigning will be kept under strict watch. The static surveillance team has been authorised to stop and check any suspected vehicle. "The video team will analyse footages, while the accounting team will ascertain the nature and the quantity of the seizures," Ms Priya said. According to her, anyone can report on any election related matter to the number 0354 2255111 in the district. SNS

TELEGRAPH, MAR 14, 2014

### **A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER**

#### **Nightmare visions are a well-worn strategy of tough elections**

Swapan Dasgupta

Hyperbolic scare-mongering is an essential part of election campaigns throughout the democratic world. Political parties and rival candidates are prone to paint exaggerated, caricatured images of their opponents in the belief that fear will motivate voters into voting against something, if not for somebody. The telecast showing a little girl quietly plucking flowers and being overwhelmed by a gigantic atomic mushroom cloud is said to have had a telling effect on the American electorate in the 1964 presidential election. Lyndon Johnson would have won the race for the White House quite easily. The mushroom cloud advertisement on TV ensured that his awkward opponent Barry Goldwater was absolutely decimated .

Goldwater, it has subsequently been remarked, was a figure so detached from the American consensus that it was a miracle that he got as far as he did in national politics. Using the fear of nuclear war to devastate him in what was essentially a one-horse race was a bit like using a sledgehammer to squash an ant.

Of course, it did not seem all that disproportionate to the LBJ campaign managers 50 years ago. In the heat of a campaign when passions run very high, a detached view of the pitch of the campaign isn't always possible.

So it was in May 2008 during the election for the mayor of London, a contest involving the old socialist warhorse Ken Livingstone and the endearingly buffoonish Boris

Johnson. Looking back at that election, which Johnson won convincingly, it is quite instructive to recollect the quantum of anti-Johnson hysteria, especially after the opinion polls showed him having a clear edge over Livingstone.

On May Day of 2008, *The Guardian* — a newspaper that sets the left-of-centre tone in British politics — the writer, Zoe Williams, penned an article with the evocative headline, “Be afraid. Be very afraid”. The newspaper presented it as an eminent Londoner’s vision of what the city would be like “if this bigoted, lying Old Etonian buffoon got his hands on our diverse and liberal capital”. A great mistake, the writer suggested, is to think Johnson “singles out any one group for his casual bile. It’s not just gay people or Muslims or Africans, it’s not just people from Portsmouth or indeed anywhere else on the south coast. He despises people who are not of his class because he is a snob. That, pretty much, means all of us. A snob’s London is a Monday-to-Thursday kind of affair, behind fusty doors, in clubs that only just let women in, let alone plebs, in restaurants that don’t have prices on the menus... That is not London... We know what London is Boris is not London”.

Since that article was written, Johnson has fought yet another election for mayor of London against Livingstone and won it conclusively. With his impish sense of humour, his unkempt looks and his incessant clowning, Boris has emerged as the favourite politician of the Conservative rank-and-file and, indeed, the favourite to succeed David Cameron as the leader of the party. London remains the carefree city it was in 2008 and hasn’t been transformed into one huge gated colony where the plebs are firmly kept in their place. Reading the English newspapers regularly, I would be forgiven for imagining that the two issues that agitate Londoners are property prices and the rights of an ever-growing number of cyclists. Even his most die-hard supporters will not accuse Johnson of creating an environment where the poor, the non-whites, the sexual minorities and the other upholders of a permissive society feel threatened.

So what was the 2008 fuss and alarmism all about? In hindsight, the fears of the soul of London being destroyed by a Conservative mayor seem ridiculously contrived. Indeed, it seems like a familiar Left-wing ploy to overturn an electoral disadvantage by using the most overused socialist weapon: the class war. However heartfelt and however poetic the fears sounded seven years ago, we can afford to smile indulgently at its very un-English hyperbole.

The reason for invoking this ridiculous footnote from recent English history should be pretty obvious. As the Indian general election campaign gathers momentum, India’s variant of the *Guardian*-readers are working themselves up into a blue funk. The alarmist despondency has everything to do with the overwhelming impression that the Gujarat chief minister, Narendra Modi, may be on the verge of creating a historic electoral upset. The very people who till not very long ago had flooded the columns of ‘respectable’ newspapers with the bold assertion that “Gujarat isn’t India”, that “Modi represents corporate India” and that “the idea of India argues against Modi” have suddenly woken up to an unexpected uprising from below.

The defection of the ultra-secular Dalit leader, Ram Vilas Paswan, a politician who had walked out of the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government protesting against the Gujarat riots of 2002, has proved to be a veritable turning point. Till then there was the self-comforting belief that Modi was preaching to the committed and that subaltern India would ensure that a ‘polarising’ leader would fail to forge a social coalition that would help him cross the 272 mark. Faith was also reposed in the Bharatiya Janata Party old-guard who would ensure that the Modi meter froze at the 160 mark, a fractured verdict that would ensure that the Gujarat leader couldn’t step out of Gandhinagar. Paswan jolted that complacency, not because he is an inspirational figure with a hold over Dalit voters all over India. His importance stemmed from the fact that he represents a large-ish section of Dalits in Bihar. If a man whose social constituency was India’s most disadvantaged could join Modi, it meant two things. First, that Modi’s deep social penetration had been vastly underestimated; and, second, that secular grandstanding was negotiable. The opinion polls haven’t suggested that the BJP-led alliance will secure an outright majority, but the example of Paswan has clearly indicated that many parties are inclined to cross over to the winning side if the opportunity presents itself.

For the better-dead-than-saffron brigade there is an additional complication. Unlike 2004, there is no faith left in the Congress. The 10-year record of the United Progressive Alliance has provoked disgust, even among its intellectual beneficiaries. Rahul Gandhi does not inspire confidence, and the talk is of a Congress resurrection in the future, minus the dynasty. There was jubilation that the Aam Aadmi Party would somehow emerge as the preferred alternative but that does not seem to be happening.

Consequently, there is a feverish bid to invoke nightmare images of the future. There are competitive assertions of drastic action in case the unthinkable happens — “I will leave India” is a promise that is unlikely to be self-fulfilling.

Modi’s victory isn’t as yet assured: it will be enough if people vote for National Democratic Alliance candidates. Assuming he is sworn in as prime minister after May 16, it is extremely unlikely the emotional architecture of India will witness a change. The committed will work towards a resurgent India with a double-digit growth; the time-servers will jockey for posts and official patronage; and the intellectuals will continue to lament over a lost idea of their India. In short, India will change, perhaps for the better, but the essence of India will be intact. And we may even look back at the imagined sounds of approaching jackboots for what they were: the alarm bells of a bitterly fought election.

**HINDUSTAN TIMES, MAR 13, 2014**

UK varsities focus on Lok Sabha polls in India

**Prasun Sonwalkar**

Several British universities have started research projects and online initiatives to focus on the forthcoming general [elections](#) in India, the largest such exercise in the world.

For a host of reasons, the study of India at various levels has been one of the most prominent themes in UK university research, particularly at centres of Indian expertise at the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh and the School of Oriental and African Studies.

The focus on Indian [elections](#) has increased with the recent opening of some ‘India centres’, such as the one at King’s College London, where experts including Sunil Khilnani, Christophe Jeffrelot and James Manor last week discussed the challenges and post-poll scenarios.

Bournemouth University is in the process of launching ‘Project India’ for producing news coverage and research on the [elections](#). It has tied up with journalism departments of some Indian universities.

“The idea is to cover the event via a website and on social media channels. The project will run from March to end of May. We are also working with two media partners — rediff.com and wonobo.com — to provide an alternative take on the Indian [elections](#),” Bournemouth lecturer Chindu Sreedharan said.

The London School of Economics would be running a series of articles and blogs on the Indian polls in coordination with academic partners Columbia University.

London School of Economics experts on India include authors Mukulika Banerjee and Sumantra Bose.

Katherine Adeney, professor at the University of Nottingham, said the School of Politics and International Relations has started a blog titled ‘Ballots and Bullets’ with academic contributions from the UK, India, Europe, Pakistan and America.

ASIAN AGE, MAR 11, 2014

### **3,000 joint secys to be on poll duty**

With the Government unable to take any major decisions as the model code of conduct is in place, the process of decision making is likely to be slowed down further as more than 3,000 officers of the rank of joint secretary and directors are being used for polling duties this time.

According to sources in the department of personnel and training, this was the highest-ever number of top bureaucrats being pumped into election duties. Thus the backlog for clearing files and decisions would continue till the new Government is in place at the Centre.

“By the time these officials return from poll duties and start clearing files, it would be mid-May as there would be a cascading effect of files getting delayed. But we will try and reduce the delays in pushing files and important clearances to the minimum so that important government functioning is not hampered,” a senior DoPT official said.



Officers of the level of joint secretary and directors are considered to be the “cutting edge” in Government functioning and are said to be the most critical link between ministers, top bureaucracy and lower level functionaries. Most of the paper work is also done at the level of joint secretary and director.

During the 2009 Lok Sabha polls, as many as 2,000 officers of the same seniority were pressed into election duties. But clearly this time around the number has shown a sharp increase. In addition, there would be a large number of junior level government employees who would be used for election purposes but their absence would not hamper work as they are not positioned in decision making positions.

DoPT official said with the Election Commission being extremely strict this time on checking of violations of the code of conduct the possibility of deployment of senior government officials cannot be ruled out since they work as Central observers on behalf of the Commission.

The DoPT and the Commission are in constant contact for the deployment of Government staff on election duties. “There would be a considerable number of employees from the state government as well but that issues is being dealt by the respective State Government and State Electoral Officers,” the official added.

TIMES OF INDIA, MAR 10, 2014

### **Election Commission to go video-toting to record candidates' spend**

[Sunil Mungara,](#)

HYDERABAD: Candidates beware, big brother is watching your every move! Every flexi banner, every hoarding being put up, mobilization of people for public meetings, or rallies that accompany candidates while filing nomination papers \_\_ all will be under the scrutiny of the [Election Commission](#) (EC). These will be videographed by professionals and included in the candidate's expenditure statement.

For the first time, the EC has taken a decision to this effect and asked returning officers (ROs) to enlist the services of skilled videographers to record every flexi put up by candidates and include it in the expenditure statement.

On the EC's instructions, the Hyderabad district administration has decided to engage nearly 150 videographers to cover two Lok Sabha constituencies -Hyderabad and Secunderabad -and 14 Assembly constituencies in Hyderabad district. "We will issue a tender notification to engage videographers in a day or two," Hyderabad collector and returning officer Mukesh Kumar Meena told TOI.

"We will depute a three-member team, including a videographer, to record and scrutinise. Later, they will send details like number of flexies displayed by candidate concerned and asked him/her to include it in the election expenditure," he said.

Usually, the candidates identify prime areas where there is a huge footfall, like shopping malls, temples, markets and public transport system (bus stops) and put up flexies. The aspirants have to ensure that flexies do not cause inconvenience to the general public and in front of religious/worships places. "Action will be initiated against candidates who violate rules prescribed in the election manual," the official added.

The videographer would also cover public meetings and rallies (convoy) taken out by the aspirants at the time of filing nominations. Sometimes, public meetings continue beyond 11 pm. A team would monitor the video and issue notices to the candidate concerned, in case he/she violates the rules and regulations prescribed in the model code of conduct (MCC). The violation may even lead to disqualifications of the candidate from the electoral fray," the collector added.

"The process of video recording will continue till elections are over," Mukesh Kumar Meena said.

STATESMAN, MAR 10, 2014

#### **No ceiling on carrying legitimate cash by public: Election Commission**

There will be no ceiling on carrying legitimate cash by the public in view of the security and anti-blackmoney measures initiated by the EC for Lok Sabha polls, but surveillance squads will have the power to intercept any suspicious transportation of cash.

The EC, which has deployed a team of flying squads and expenditure observers immediately after the poll schedule was announced on 5 March, has set no ceiling of cash that can be carried by the public but with a condition that surveillance squads will have the power to intercept and check any suspicious transportation of cash.

The commission which has issued a slew of measures for the chief electoral officers (CEOs) of all states and union territories with regard to curbing blackmoney and illegal money power during polls has not stipulated any ceiling for carrying or transporting cash this time to minimise genuine public grievances.

The EC, which has activated an exclusive election expenditure monitoring (EEM) cell within its establishment few years ago with the sole purpose of combating blackmoney instances in the electoral process, has brought on board the investigations arm of the income tax department and other revenue intelligence agencies to provide it with vital inputs to check the menace.

“There is no limit on carrying cash during the polls period this time. However, any cash beyond Rs 50,000 could be subjected to scrutiny by EC nominated flying squads and the individual or entity carrying the amount should furnish documents in this regard.

“Also, any cash beyond Rs 10 lakh will be reported to the I-T department by these squads for action at their end,” a senior official involved in combat blackmoney measures of the EC said.

The EC has decided to ease its norms and directives on cash transportation as it received a number of representations from public groups and trader bodies over the alleged harassment while they were carrying big cash sums for the conduct of business deals or social functions like wedding among others.

A senior income tax department official, nominated by the EC, said members of the public carrying any amount in cash beyond Rs 50,000 should always keep documents with them which substantiates the source and purpose of the money and they will let off post-verification if intercepted by surveillance squads.

However, in case, any small amount is suspected to be used in any poll-related inducement, it will be seized and proceedings will be initiated under law. EC has also asked the parties they should conduct their transactions through authorised banking channels and even pay their candidates through the party account, thereby minimising the instances of cash being taken through road or by air.

The I-T department has, meanwhile, activated its air intelligence unit (AIU) at all major airports in order to check cash movement through airports. Past instances have indicated that businessmen, locals and other sections of travellers had to genuinely carry cash during the polls for a variety of purposes and once the cash is seized, it resulted in trouble for the individual.

As general elections draw closer, Sebi has enhanced its surveillance to thwart any attempts by listed companies and others to channelise illicit funds through capital markets or investment schemes for polls.

The elections are scheduled to begin next month and concerns are being raised that huge sums of money could be spent by political parties and their leaders to lure voters.

According to a senior official, there are also indications that many entities running illicit money-pooling schemes have lined up huge redemptions from fictitious investor accounts for coming weeks and this money could also find their way into electioneering activities.

Capital market regulator Sebi itself has initiated action against more than 500 companies that have allegedly garnered funds from investors through illicit money collection schemes. In many such cases, a large number of fictitious accounts are also created for money laundering purposes.

While robust surveillance and intelligence systems are already in place for detection and prevention of any kinds of money laundering activities in capital markets, regulators are being extra watchful because of elections being typically known as periods of increased illicit fund flows.

## GAS RESOURCES

BUSINESS STANDARD, MAR 10, 2014

Gas price set to be doubled from April 1

**Govt notification on \$8.4 a unit price likely by month-end**

**Shine Jacob**

The price of domestic natural gas is set to double to around \$8.4 a unit from April 1, with the government coming out with a notification on this by the end of this month. This is in spite of political pressure and speculation in the past few months over the exact amount of increase.

However, a question mark remains on whether [Niko Resources](#) and [BP](#), which partner Mukesh Ambani-promoted Reliance Industries Ltd ([RIL](#)) in the KG-D6 block, will be allowed to avail of a higher price for gas produced from the block. "A call will be taken on RIL's bank guarantee amount for KG-D6 gas after notification of the new price. A decision on participation of Niko and BP in the arbitration process (initiated by RIL against the government) could be left to the Supreme Court," said an official.

### STEPPING ON THE GAS

BP and Niko might not get higher price for KG-D6 gas, unless they furnish bank guarantees and become part of RIL's arbitration process against the govt

[CCEA](#) had decided to allow RIL a higher price for gas from April 1, provided the company gave a bank guarantee for the shortfall in KG-D6 production and signed a supplementary agreement with the govt for the new dispensation

The government had on January 10 notified gas pricing guidelines on the basis of a formula notified by the Rangarajan committee

On November 14 last year, the [petroleum ministry](#) had slapped an additional penalty of \$792 mn on RIL, taking the total penalty since 2010-11 to \$1.797 bn

Niko and BP might not get to increase the KG-D6 [gas price](#) unless they, too, furnish bank guarantees and become part of the arbitration process. "We have already sent the bank guarantee note for legal vetting," the official added.

The [Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs](#) had decided to allow RIL to avail of a higher price from April 1, provided the company gave a bank guarantee to cover the

production shortfall (if the charge of intentional hoarding by it was proved) and signed a supplementary agreement with the government for the new dispensation. A KG-D6 management committee meeting could formalise this supplementary agreement on Monday.

The government had notified gas pricing guidelines on January 10. "The price will be in the range of \$8.4 a million British thermal unit (mBtu), as cleared by the Cabinet. A committee that is to decide on pricing on a quarterly basis will take a decision by the end of March," said an official close to the development. For every \$1 price increase, the government will get \$500 million in the form of royalty and other taxes.

A committee headed by Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council Chairman [C Rangarajan](#) had suggested a pricing formula by taking the average of long-term and spot global prices of liquefied natural gas.

After the pricing becomes clear, a three-member committee, comprising the director general of hydrocarbons, an additional secretary and a joint secretary in the petroleum ministry, will decide on the bank guarantee amount, taking the actual production shortfall into account.

On November 14 last year, the petroleum ministry had slapped an additional penalty of \$792 million on RIL, taking the total penalty on the company since 2010-11 to \$1.797 billion. In 2010-11 and 2011-12, the ministry had imposed a total penalty of \$1.005 billion.

RIL's arbitration process with the government has been stuck as the third arbitrator has yet to be named. Former chief justices S P Bharucha and V N Khare, nominated respectively by RIL and the government, are the other members of the three-member arbitration panel. "The Supreme Court will decide on the third arbitrator," an RIL official said.

## HEALTH SERVICES

HINDU, MAR 9, 2014

### **CGHS standoff: Hospitals discontinue cashless services**

Patients wait outside a CGHS dispensary in Chennai. Notwithstanding government's assurance to hospitals that dues under the CGHS will be cleared in a week, the health-care service providers on Saturday decided to go ahead with the discontinuation of the cashless services.

Notwithstanding government's assurance to hospitals that dues under the CGHS will be cleared in a week, the health-care service providers on Saturday decided to go ahead with the discontinuation of the cashless services.

The hospitals are demanding immediate clearance of pending outstanding of over Rs. 200 crore towards them under the Central Government Health Scheme.

The government had on Friday said the pending amount is likely to be cleared "within a week" and had also announced a revision of payments as demanded by private hospitals association.

"Large and long pending payments which far exceeded the agreed upon time frame... It takes weeks and months for hospitals to receive the money," the Association of Healthcare Providers (India) said in a statement on Saturday.

Under the circumstances, it has become un-tenable for hospitals to continue giving cashless services as they are not getting paid for the services for months.

"CGHS own dashboard showed Rs. 202 crore as outstanding to hospitals as on January 31, 2014," it said.

Very little amount out of this has actually been received till now, whereas more bills have been raised and submitted by the hospitals, the statement said.

Hospitals are being threatened that they should continue with cashless services. "CGHS is very conveniently avoiding the fact that Memorandum of Understanding (signed between them) clearly provides with obligation on part of CGHS to pay the dues within 10 days," the association said.

Hospitals very humbly want to know that with what legal and moral right, CGHS can ask hospitals about violating the terms and conditions, when CGHS itself has violated so openly the terms and conditions of the MoU. How can CGHS demand hospitals to continue cashless services when some of the hospitals in NCR have pending amount? they asked.

Hospitals, through their association, have been holding meetings with CGHS since March 2013. "There has not been any improvement in the working of CGHS. Only when

hospitals have been pushed to wall as explained above, they have been forced to withdraw cashless services,” the statement said.

The Union health ministry is working on resolving the crisis.

DECCAN HERALD, MAR 10, 2014

### **Welcome changes**

**The latest annual health survey shows that two key indicators of public health and welfare - maternal and child mortality rates - have shown welcome changes even in economically and socially backward states.**

But the improvement is not as much as needed and targeted, and is uneven and inconsistent. According to the data released by the Registrar General of India, the maternal mortality rate declined by 16 per cent from 212 deaths per 1,00,000 births to 178 during the period 2007-08 to 2011-12. Infant mortality rate also declined, though not to the extent of the maternal mortality rate, from 44 deaths per 1,000 in 2011 to 42 in 2012. Nine states, in the north and east, which are the traditional laggards, have presented a better performance.

The figures show that the country as a whole will certainly miss the millennium development goal (MSG) of 103 maternal casualties per one lakh births and 28 deaths per 1,000 births of children, set by the UN for the year 2015. Though some states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu have already surpassed the MDGs and other well-performing states have maintained their pace of performance, it is felt that the UN goals may be achieved at the national level only in 2025. This is disappointing because even countries with less resources, like Nepal and Bangladesh, have outperformed India. The number of deliveries in hospitals and sex ratio at birth and other important parameters have also shown improvement but the overall picture has to improve further.

One finding is that the indicators started looking up after the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) was launched. The maximum decline in the maternal and child mortality rates occurred in the last 10 years which also coincided with the NRHM. But the NRHM, which has a budget of over Rs 20,000 crore, is scam-ridden and poorly implemented in most states. Uttar Pradesh, which has seen the worst scandal in its implementation, tops the country in child mortality rate at 68 per thousand births. More effective implementation of the mission with decentralisation of its working to the district level can produce better results. Even when some states showed improved performance, many districts remained where they were. The urban-rural divide in performance is also glaring. Factors like education of women and nutrition are also important but a more efficient implementation of the NRHM can speed up progress.



INDIAN EXPRESS, MAR 14, 2014

**On the table: evening OPDs, online death certificates**

A day after announcing a reshuffle in top posts at 23 government hospitals, Health Minister Satyendra Jain on Wednesday said the government will start evening OPDs in 11 dispensaries as a pilot project to address long waiting lists.

He made the announcement at a press conference called to highlight the achievements of his department during his one month in governance. “We are trying evening OPDs as a pilot measure. If it works out, we will replicate it in dispensaries and hospitals,” Jain said. He said in the next seven days, the government would also bring in a system for people to apply for death certificates online from municipal bodies using numbers of hospital discharge slips of patients.

“Currently, death certificates can be taken after 21 days of a person’s demise from a hospital. With the new system, people can apply online directly to the municipal body,” Jain said.

Hospitals have also been asked to upgrade their mortuary infrastructure to “ensure dignity of the dead”, and have been instructed that handing over of a body to family members must not be delayed on any account, including “delay in payment for treatment”. In an effort to computerise health records, the government is starting another pilot project at Lok Nayak Hospital from February 15. “We are also trying a consolidated mechanism of drug purchase to ensure availability of all drugs in hospitals. Currently, there are about 40 points of purchase and there are a lot of complaints regarding drugs not being available in hospitals. We hope a centralised system will solve this,” Jain said.

For ensuring seamless treatment of patients from the economically weaker section (EWS) in private hospitals, all hospitals have been instructed to set up dedicated help desks and also display their rate charts accordingly, if any.

“Often, patients are handed over bills at the end of their hospital stay with no prior notification. So, we have asked hospitals to display rates,” Jain said. All hospitals, including private and central government ones, have been asked to provide free treatment for the first 24 hours to victims of sexual assault, rape, and acid attack.

All hospitals have also been asked not to pressurise patients to purchase prescribed medicines from hospital pharmacies. “Patients have the freedom to buy drugs from any pharmacy of their choice where they get the maximum discount. All government

hospitals have been instructed to prescribe generic drugs. We also request private hospitals to follow this,”Jain said.

The Delhi government is strengthening its state-level commission to monitor female foeticide and sex determination.

“In the last four years, Delhi’s sex ratio has been declining progressively. In the next one year, we will do whatever it takes to ensure it is stabilised,”Jain said.

Long-pending projects of the Delhi government, including the Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital in Tahirpur, will be started in the next five months, he said.

## HOUSING

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, MAR 13, 2014

### **DDA to restructure departments to boost operations**

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) will restructure its operations in a bid to enhance efficiency and productivity.

"The Delhi Development Authority would be restructuring its processes, including the working of its departments. This is with intent not just to revamp the DDA but to equip it with modern processes to enhance its efficiency," said a press statement issued by Lt Governor's office on Wednesday.

The decision was taken at a meeting today to discuss the restructuring plans. The meeting was chaired by Lt Governor Najeeb Jung and attended by the chief secretary, vice chairman of DDA, director general of National Productivity Council and other officials of DDA.

Jung has instructed the DDA to finish this exercise in the next four months. "The road map for DDA's restructuring aims to analyze the present role of DDA and its future undertakings, which are in line with Delhi Master Plan 2012.

"The restructuring will involve a comprehensive study of the processes used for implementing various schemes of the DDA. It will identify improvement of such processes by adopting computerization and automation," said the statement.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

STATESMAN, MAR 14, 2014

### **Obama rejects Russia's slapdash referendum in Crimea**

The US President, Barack Obama, has vehemently rejected the Russian bid for a "slapdash" referendum in Ukraine's Crimea region to merge it with Russia. "We completely reject a referendum patched together in a few weeks with Russian military personnel basically taking over Crimea. We reject its legitimacy. It is contrary to international law. It is contrary to the Ukrainian constitution," Mr Obama told reporters following his meeting with Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk. "I know that we've heard from the Russian federation this notion that these kinds of decisions are often made in other places, and they've even analogised it to Scotland or other situations of that sort," he said.

"In each of those cases that they've cited, decisions were made by a national government through a long, lengthy, deliberative process. It's not something that happens in a few days, and it's not something that happens with an outside army essentially taking over the region," Mr Obama said.

"The issue now is whether or not Russia is able to militarily dominate a region of somebody else's country, engineer a slapdash referendum, and ignore not only the Ukrainian constitution but a Ukrainian government that includes parties that are historically in opposition with each other ~ including the party of the previous President," he said.

"So we will not recognise, certainly, any referendum that goes forward. My hope is that as a consequence of diplomatic efforts over the next several days that there will be a rethinking of the process that's been put forward," said the United States President.

## LIBRARIES

HINDU, MAR 13, 2014

### **Miranda House library shows the way**

VIJETHA S.N.

Renovations are on at Delhi University's Miranda House to blend it with the rest of the college.

Dingy corners, zero natural lighting, dusty books -- replete with yellowing pages -- that seemed to have never left the shelves: all this pictured in a crumbling library set up all those years ago is sadly what you come to expect when you walk into almost any college library in Delhi University's North Campus. But Miranda House is truly an exception -- be it for its square footage, colour-coded books, Braille library or the multiple seating arrangements sans dust.

"The total carpeted area is around 21,275 square feet, we have about one lakh books dating from the founding days in the 1940s which are being constantly rebound, we also have e-books available as well as a digital resource centre," said college Principal Pratiba Jolly, while conducting a tour of the library building which is a stand-alone structure of mammoth proportions in a corner of the college. "The original building was in the style of the 1970s when it was built, but we recently had the red-bricks added to the outer structure to blend in with the rest of the college," she added.

Renovations are still going on at the three-floored library, with a lift in the works. Ms. Jolly explained that any construction work had to be timed in order to not inconvenience the students. Miranda House is also one of the few colleges which keeps its library open until 7-30 p.m. Almost every other college library shuts shop at 3-30 p.m. This is in addition to the department libraries which are located in different buildings.

The new four-year undergraduate course which has sought to do away with text-books has also prescribed a long reading list, and even here Miranda House seemed to be one of the few colleges which seemed to be consciously making sure enough copies were available.

Another factor that tipped in favour of this college's library was the importance given to reading for pleasure. An entire section was decided to fiction and poetry, contemporary and old. There was English and Urdu, Punjabi and even Tamil. "We organise book sales where we procure books from faculty and alumni and sell them for a smaller price to students and faculty."

There are separate seating arrangements to read and reference with enough natural and artificial lighting, and most importantly a separate section for the faculty is also being renovated.

The college funding is not more than the funding given by the UGC to its neighbouring colleges whose libraries are not spaces that anyone would wish to spend any time in. But as Miranda House has displayed, the other colleges too -- now flushed with funds after the OBC expansion – can easily take a leaf out of this book.

## PARLIAMENT

HINDU, MAR 11, 2014

### **SC sets deadline for trial against MPs and MLAs**

In order to expedite proceedings against sitting MPs and MLAs in criminal cases, the Supreme Court on Monday set a deadline for lower courts to complete trial in cases involving lawmakers within a year of framing of charges.

A bench headed by Justice R.M. Lodha also said that trial courts will have to give explanation to the Chief Justice of the respective high court if the trial is not completed within a year.

The bench, however, said the period can be extended by the Chief Justice of the High Court if he is satisfied with the reason given by trial judge for not completing the trial within this period.

It said all such proceedings involving lawmakers must be conducted on a day-to-day basis in order to expedite the trial

As the trial is kept pending for years, lawmakers continue to enjoy membership of the legislative body despite being charged in a heinous offence, the court noted.

The court passed the order on a PIL filed by an NGO, Public Interest Foundation, seeking its direction for expeditious trial in cases involving lawmakers.

The NGO contended that MPs and MLAs continue to be Members of Parliament and Assembly for a long time due to delay in proceedings.

HINDU, MAR 14, 2014

### **Time-bound trials for legislators**

By fixing a deadline of one year from the date of framing of charges for the completion of trial involving members of Parliament and Legislative Assemblies, the Supreme Court has once again intervened effectively to give some credibility to the idea of cleansing the polity of criminalisation. Last year, it gave a jolt to the political class by striking down a provision that protected sitting legislators from immediate disqualification on conviction. It has now sought to ensure that repeated adjournments and dilatory tactics do not indefinitely protect lawmakers from conviction and disqualification. The interim order — on a petition by a voluntary organisation — making the framing of charges as the point at which the clock begins to tick is based on a Law Commission recommendation that the filing of charge sheet could not be the appropriate stage for disqualification of candidates from contesting. The Court has asked trial courts to wrap up trials involving legislators within a year; and if they are unable to do so, they need to explain the delay to the Chief Justice of the High Court. When the Supreme Court held in 1979, and reiterated in 1986, that speedy trial is a fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution, what it had in

mind was the plight of hundreds of poor prisoners languishing in jails across the country without being brought to trial for years. The languid criminal justice system, on the other hand, has worked to the advantage of members of the political class who occasionally find themselves facing prosecution on corruption and other charges.

Many political leaders and functionaries have managed to prolong for years an inherently supine trial mechanism, enjoying in the meantime repeated electoral victories and comfortable tenures in the legislatures of the States and in Parliament. A significant number among the law-making community, including leaders of political parties, manage to get trial proceedings stayed by superior courts or postponed by means of interminable interlocutory petitions. The Criminal Procedure Code does not prescribe a time limit for winding up a trial, but Section 309 makes it clear that once examination of witnesses begins, it shall proceed on a day-to-day basis until all witnesses are examined. This provision is rarely adhered to for various reasons. It is no easy task for the lower judiciary as MPs and MLAs are influential litigants, engaging the services of a battery of advocates who spare no effort and leave no procedural aspect unquestioned before allowing the trial to commence. The latest order helps address this problem by empowering the trial court to refuse routine adjournments.



## **POLICE**

HINDUSTAN TIMES, MAR 13, 2014

**Panel pulls up Delhi Police for corruption**

**Faizan Haidar**

In its report, a parliamentary panel has pulled up the Delhi Police for prevalence of corruption among its ranks. Corruption in government departments, especially in the police force, impacts public at large, it said.

The panel has also suggested that CCTV cameras should be installed at all traffic signals to prevent traffic policemen from taking bribes. There will be a constant monitoring of not just traffic movement, but also whether the police personnel are discharging their duties honestly.

“The Delhi Police’s zero-tolerance policy to corruption flies in its own face when people observe traffic police officials accepting money at red lights from bus drivers and commuters for violation of traffic rules. It is said that transporters, particularly bus operators, have to pay them a monthly fee at various points on their route of operations,” the committee said in the report.

Another important suggestion was formation of flying squads that would conduct raids and organise traps. The committee has also directed the Delhi Police to take corrective measures to change its image of ‘paying money for lucrative postings’.

In its reply to the panel, the Delhi Police had claimed that all complaints of corruption are immediately looked into and strict action is taken if the allegations are substantiated. “As regards the appointments to various posts within the Delhi Police, transfers and postings are decided by the Delhi Police Establishment Board and not by any individual. The Delhi Police maintains total transparency in this regard,” the force had said in its reply.

Police also said that its vigilance branch conducts enquiries into complaints of non-registration of cases, corruption and other malpractices against police officials. The department, it said, also maintains a list of personnel of doubtful integrity.

## POLITICAL PARTIES

HINDU, MAR 12, 2014

### **'Remove unauthorised flag masts or be ready to pay the price'**

keep in mind:S.Jayandhi, Collector and Returning Officer of the Karur Lok Sabha Constituency, speaking at an all-party meeting on Tuesday. —photo: R.M.Rajarathinam  
Collector and Returning Officer of the Karur Lok Sabha Constituency, S.Jayandhi, has instructed political parties to remove unauthorised flag masts immediately, as any official removal henceforth will attract a heavy price that will be added to the expenditure account of the candidates.

Addressing an all-party meet convened here on Tuesday, Ms.Jayandhi in the company of Superintendent of Police K.Joshi Nirmal Kumar and District Revenue Officer M.Aruna instructed the representatives of political parties that only registered transport or commercial vehicles must be used for electioneering apart from the candidate's own vehicle. The vehicle must carry the permission granted by the Returning Officer prominently on the windscreen and all vehicles used for campaigning must have been granted permission by the officials concerned.

The Collector also instructed the politicians to get prior permission from the relevant authorities, including the police to conduct rallies, meetings, and processions.

Keep a tab on the number of vehicles used in the campaign, she told the political party representatives, as the unbridled numbers could result in charges coming up against the candidates, the Collector cautioned.

During the interaction, representatives of some parties wanted some sort of regularisation in the timings of the bars attached to TASMAL outlets . On charges of liberal campaign by certain parties on the local cable TV channels, the Collector said that so far no complaint has been received and if one were to be received then action would be taken promptly. Parties also wanted the list and contact details of subordinate officers who were vested with the task of manning the Assembly segments for getting permissions and filing complaints. Representatives of AIADMK, DMK, DMDK, MDMK, PMK, Congress, Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi, Puthiya Tamilagam and other political parties participated.

## POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

HINDUSTAN TIMES, MAR 12, 2014

### **Cong appoints state chiefs for Telangana, Andhra**

The Congress on Tuesday appointed separate state unit chiefs for Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Former minister Raghuvira Reddy will head the party in Seemandhra while his colleague in the Kiran Kumar Reddy government Ponnala Lakshmaiah is the Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) chief in the new state of Telangana.

Former Indian Air Force fighter pilot and ex-minister Uttam Kumar Reddy has been appointed the working president in Telangana.

The party also appointed separate election, campaign and manifesto committees for the two states.

Union minister K Chiranjeevi will head the campaign committee and former state minister Anam Ramanarayana Reddy has been named as the chairman of the manifesto panel for Seemandhra.

Former AP deputy chief minister Damodar Raja Narasimha will head the campaign committee in Telangana and D Sridhar Babu is the manifesto committee chairman for the proposed state.

The announcement came after day-long consultations between Congress president Sonia Gandhi, her political secretary Ahmed Patel and party general secretary in-charge of Andhra Pradesh Digvijaya Singh.

Congress sources said outgoing PCC chief Botcha Satyanarayana is upset with the decision as he wanted to continue on the post till the Lok Sabha and assembly [elections](#) in the two states were over.

TRIBUNE, MAR 11, 2014

### **Poll surge vs PM stakes**

### **Narendra Modi currently leads the pack**

### **B.G. Verghese**

THE latest opinion polls following the announcement of the general election have forecast major gains by the BJP-NDA alliance at the cost of a floundering Congress-UPA. One need not question the integrity of the major polls, though lesser known pollsters have been exposed through a sting operation as willing to trade margins for a consideration, an offshoot of the entirely unethical paid news phenomenon. The 11-party pre-election front remains wrapped in uncertainty, while certain players like the AIDMK,

Trinamool and even the BJD remain open to post-election alliances, with Jayalalithaa and Mamata Banerjee making no secret of their prime ministerial ambitions.

Polls are prone to go awry. Even if the party numbers turn out to be broadly right, there could be upsets in the indicated preference or assumption of who will be Prime Minister. Modi currently leads the pack but it is not axiomatic that he will be the final choice. He remains controversial and even divisive to some, even within the BJP, witness the inner-party tussle over whether Murli Manohar Joshi should give up his Varanasi seat to accommodate Modi.

Elements within the BJP worry that once elevated, the man may remain entrenched for two or more terms, thus putting paid to their ambitions. But the greater concern will be the views of the NDA partners unless the BJP on its own is in such a dominating position that it can dictate any terms. This seems unlikely. So even if Modi is the BJP's choice (whatever the inner reservations), the NDA will have a casting vote on who is to be Prime Minister. The constituent parties may well prefer someone less right-wing, tainted and divisive and, more importantly, less influenced by the RSS- Hindutva lobby which has been given, or has certainly assumed, a central role in the forthcoming elections as a matter of "Hindu survival".

The RSS, a so-called "cultural body", has been increasingly steering BJP policy of late, wary of losing its operational status as head of the Parivar and keeper of "cultural nationalism". It will not allow a BJP government to cut loose. In his latest Vijaya Dashmi speech following its Amravati conclave last year, Mohan Bhagwat has called on RSS cadres to take the field and deliver "100 per cent Hindu voters" to the polling booths. Ashok Singhal of the VHP is in fear of Hindus becoming a minority and has urged Hindu mothers to bear five children each! Narendra Modi has told Northeasterners to welcome Hindu migrants from Bangladesh, Fiji, Mauritius and the US, where they face persecution, but throw out Muslim and Christian infiltrators. In Ayodhya, the repair and construction of mosques within a sacred radius has virtually been prohibited under VHP pressure. Numbers of ex-servicemen are meanwhile joining the BJP on account of its sturdy "nationalism".

At its latest annual conclave in Bangalore the RSS determined not to compromise on "moral values, social systems and traditions in the name of individual freedom" on such issues as live-in relationships and homosexuality. Wendy Donniger's book "On Hinduism" has been pulped under pressure. Elsewhere moral policing continues. The BJP continues to demand the passage of a uniform civil code; but what is utterly surprising is that the party does not legislate this in any of the States it rules as is constitutionally permissible and does no injury to personal law. A UCC, already partly extant in the form of the Special Marriage Act, would liberate women from male bondage, make for equal opportunity and cut at the root of the power of fundamentalist clerics of all faiths who now rule the roost. The indifference to such a basic reform across the board, largely born of legal illiteracy reinforced by gender insensitivity, is truly astonishing. The Supreme Court has, however, just moved to legalise Muslim adoption under civil law, a step towards the making of a uniform code.

To get back to the polls, aware of the negative vibes caused by Modi's record in 2002, Rajnath Singh, the BJP president, has said that the party is prepared to apologise to the Muslims in case any injustice was done to them. Only a sense of inner guilt can explain this dubious apology. A more curious reference to 2002 came thereafter from Venkiah Naidu, who sought to prove that the party is stronger than any individual (such as Modi). He argued that when Vajpayee chastised Modi and called on him to resign, reminding him of his "raj dharma", as Gujarat's Chief Minister, the party collectively vetoed the Prime Minister. Was Vajpayee then an ill-informed maverick talking out of turn or a liberal statesman deeply anguished by the holocaust?

So the jury is still out on who may be Prime Minister even if the 2014 electoral outcome indicates a BJP surge under Modi's leadership. One must wait to see how the chips fall. However, one does not see the Congress under Rahul Gandhi going anywhere. The government was busy frantically handing out lollipops hours before the election code came into force. Governors were appointed at 3.20 a.m, the Defence Minister's achievements were eulogised at 7.30 a.m. and the Home Ministry announced that certain Wakf properties would not be acquired just 10 minutes before the election code deadline. Reservations for Jats from the OBC quota were also announced.

In another display of illiberalism, a group of women academics at Aligarh Muslim University celebrated the International Women's Day by extolling "purdah". At a private Meerut college, a group of Kashmiri students that cheered Pakistan's cricket victory over India caused some understandable annoyance. That was then followed by an over-the-top sedition charge against them by the UP police which was fortunately rescinded a day later after Omar Abdullah spoke to Akhilesh Yadav. We have to become more mature and avoid knee-jerk reactions.

The poll campaign is warming up but the AAP-BJP brawls in Delhi, Lucknow and in Gujarat are a warning signal. AAP was wrong to see the Gandhinagar police's temporary detention of Kejriwal's motorcade for moving without sanction after the coming into force of the election code, as an "arrest". This sparked off a fractious Delhi rally by AAP supporters outside the BJP office and a retaliatory strike by the BJP in Lucknow. This kind of rowdyism must be put down with a firm hand. Nor should the man who blackened Yogendra Yadav's face with ink at Delhi's Jantar Matar be let off on Yadav saying so. Unless such conduct is dealt with sternly, others will be encouraged to misbehave and plead immunity.

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DECCAN HERALD, MAR 10, 2014

### **Akhilesh sacks two ministers**

**Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday sacked two senior ministers of his cabinet for “anti-party” activities and speculations are rife that more heads may roll in the coming days.**

Sources said Anand Singh, who was the agriculture minister, was shown the door over his son and Kirthivardhan Singh's allegation against Samajwadi Party chief Mulayam Singh Yadav. Kirthivardhan, an MP who recently joined the BJP, has claimed that he had to pay a bribe of Rs 5,000 to a leader to meet Mulayam even though he was a parliamentarian. The allegation was denied by the SP.

Though Anand Singh tried his best to explain that he has nothing to do with his son's allegation and his decision to join the BJP, Akhilesh sacked him on Sunday as his continuance would have sent a wrong message to the party workers, sources said.

Minister of state for stamp Manoj Paras was sacked after he was made an accused in a rape case. The government had made efforts to withdraw the case which was pending at a Bareilly court but it could not succeed.

Sources said Akhilesh did not want to give his opponents an opportunity to attack him on this count. They said some more ministers could be sacked in the days to come.

Mulayam Singh Yadav had recently expressed displeasure with Akhilesh Yadav government in the state and asked the state ministers to mend their ways or be ready to face the consequences. The SP supremo had told the ministers to either "perform" or "perish".

## STATE

HINDU, MAR 12, 2014

### **Small States, big problems**

AJAY GUDAVARTHY

Smaller States have been the new political mode of addressing basic issues that were otherwise left unresolved. However, fighting for a new state and reconstructing on a more sustainable democratic content are undoubtedly two different issues all together. One does not automatically promise the other, if there is anything to learn from the previous history of smaller States in India.

The premise of carving out smaller States in India shifted from the formation of linguistic states to one of, since the 1990s, rearranging them on the basis of backwardness and a lack of development. However, even a cursory look at how Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand have fared will tell us how the mere formation of a smaller State is no guarantee for better lives for those social groups for whom these States have been created. Uttarakhand continues to be at the lower end in the Human Development Index. There was abject callousness in dealing with the recent floods, focussing solely on how to make it more tourist-friendly rather than planning for the rehabilitation of displaced residents. There was little concern demonstrated for the “local” people in whose name the State was created.

Chhattisgarh has witnessed the largest displacement of tribals in recent times. There have been sustained attempts to dispossess them of their land which they have inhabited for centuries in order to extract mineral wealth. Even as tribals were ostensibly empowered by the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), there were attempts to invoke the clause of Eminent Domain, in the name of national interest. The displacement of tribals was in fact “outsourced” by the State to vigilante groups formed through what was depicted as a spontaneous uprising called “Salwa Judum” — in effect an organised effort by non-tribals and traders from outside the State. How did they get the better of the tribals in whose name the State was created? Jharkhand turned out to be perhaps the worst of the three. With hardly any agenda of development worth mentioning, the State turned into a mining hell of “predatory growth,” eventually resulting in a series of scams and criminal proceedings being initiated against the first tribal Chief Minister of the State. Thus, how optimistic can one get about Telangana?

### Questionable model of growth

When States remain backward for long, they are ushered in to create new growth in order to catch up with the rest. While this kind of growth-centric discourse has been the rhetoric of the neo-liberal economy for the last three decades, it neatly overlaps with the aspirations that lie behind the creation of smaller States. However, the nature of the economy in these States remains distinct, since they are latecomers. The lack of industry, an agrarian crisis and a low level of infrastructural facilities push such States into

adopting a model of development where growth can be achieved in spite of these handicaps. This, as we witnessed with the examples of the three smaller States, results in an unprecedented exploitation of raw materials such as the mining of minerals instead of the creation of industry, wanton land deals, a boost to the construction industry and the conversion of fertile agricultural land into speculative real estate transactions, since agriculture in any case was untenable and non-profitable.

Alongside these possibilities, Telangana has also been a haven for liquor contractors since a large chunk of State revenue is from liquor contracts. Civil, liquor and mining contractors have come to constitute the dominant, economic elite and the political class. Added to this speculative nature of the economy — especially in the case of Telangana — is the excessive concentration of resources in the capital city of Hyderabad. Since Hyderabad is already well-developed in terms of infrastructure, there remains little possibility of developing other smaller towns for the purpose of economic investments. It is precisely for this reason that the clamour over Hyderabad is detrimental to the interests of other backward districts in the region. Therefore, it is reasonable to bring into question how such a model of growth will be able to address the aspirations of the various social groups that have mobilised themselves relentlessly in a struggle for a separate state of Telangana. Will this model be able to address the impending agrarian crisis that has resulted in scores of farmer suicides? Will it provide employment to the students who formed the backbone of the movement? Will it provide relief to artisans and other nascent non-farm sectors in the rural hinterland? Finally, will it be able to create new avenues to stop massive migration that many districts of Telangana have witnessed in the last three decades?

#### Politics of polarisation

On the political front too there are many challenges that Telangana will have to face, and this dream of a “New Telangana” that was ushered in by the leaders needs closer introspection — something that has been missing so far from the discourse. With a clear possibility of an alliance, after Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) leader K. Chandrasekhar Rao rejected the idea of a merger between the TRS and the Congress, there will be no regional alternative left in the State except for the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) that has not done well electorally in the last decade or so. This will undoubtedly open up new space for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) that has also championed the cause of Telangana.

Telangana was ruled by the Nizam, and most of the districts have a Muslim population not less than 13-14 per cent. Added to this is the imagination among the Muslim population that they once upon a time in history belonged to the ruling elite. It is this imagination that is always invoked by the likes of All India Majlis Ittehadul Muslimeen (MIM) chief Asaduddin Owaisi and his brother, Akbaruddin Owaisi. While as rhetoric it might provide a sense of security for the Muslims, it also creates fertile ground for the agenda of Hindutva and a politics of polarising Hindus and Muslims along religious lines. In fact, the BJP sees Telangana as its second stop in South India, after Karnataka. While the dominant castes of Reddys and Velamas constitute the leadership of the TRS and the



Congress, there is a distinct possibility of the BJP shifting ground to mobilise the Other Backward Classes, weaning them away from the TDP. Along with the conservative Brahminical social elite, OBCs and even Dalits could be the social base of the BJP to pursue its Hindutva dream, leaving Telangana with no democratic social force that could counter its divisive agenda.

The sentiment of being deprived in a backward region and culturally subjugated and victimised are grounds for the demand for a separate state that can very easily be mobilised, once a new State is formed, against imagined aggressors within the State. It is for this reason that the MIM has been opposed to the demand for a separate State — an issue that was put on the back burner by the leaders championing the cause of Telangana, never looking for ways of addressing it.

In fact, when Mr. Chandrasekhar Rao once recalled the legacy of the Nizam, which was in any case problematic, it led to massive disapproval. The history of the Telangana struggle of the 1940s and the popular memory of the atrocities committed by the Razakars, the private army unleashed by the Nizam, continue to haunt public and political debate in the region, conveniently forgetting that the landlords who sided with the Razakars belonged to the now dominant Reddy and Velama castes. Much of the public campaign of the BJP in the region, alongside the demand for Telangana, was fashioned around this selective construction of history. Another Muzaffarnagar or a Gujarat cannot be ruled out in the near future in the “New” Telangana.

(Ajay Gudavarthy is with the Centre for Political Studies, JNU, Delhi.)

Even a cursory look at how Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand have fared will tell us how the mere formation of a smaller State is no guarantee for better lives for those groups for whom these States have been created

## TERRORISM

HINDU, MAR 10, 2014

### **BSF gives list of 66 terror camps**

The Border Security Force (BSF) has handed over a list of 66 camps of Northeast insurgents to the Border Guard Bangladesh, seeking actions against them.

“We have requested our counterparts in Bangladesh for cooperation in dismantling the camps of insurgents from the region. We have handed over a list of 66 camps that exist in Bangladesh,” Sudhir Kumar Srivastava, Inspector General, BSF Assam Frontier, told reporters here on Sunday.

The list was handed over at the 3-day biannual IG-level meeting of border management and coordination held from March 6 at the headquarters of Meghalaya frontier of the BSF here. The camps belonged to United Liberation Front of Asom and National Democratic Front of Bodoland (anti-talks) of Assam, People’s Liberation of Army and Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup of Manipur, National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivah) of Nagaland besides those of the Tripura’s National Liberation Front , the BSF official said.  
— PTI

## TRANSPORT

HINDUSTAN TIMES, MAR 13, 2014

**India's first heritage transport museum opens near Gurgaon**

**Siddhartha Rai**

From a boat that used to carry passengers across the Yamuna to a stylish 1924 Ford — vehicles that have become a part of the history and heritage of India went on display at the country's first Heritage Transport Museum on Saturday.

The unique facility is spread across a massive area of 90,000 square feet and located off NH-8 in Taoru, around 35km from Gurgaon. It was inaugurated by Haryana chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda.

The museum, which has been inspired by similar structures in London in the United Kingdom and Los Angeles in the US, has been given shape by vintage car collector Tarun Thakral who went public with his collection of cars on Saturday to showcase the history of transportation in India.

The museum — which sprawls across four levels — was completed in three years at a cost of Rs15 crore, of which Rs. 6 crore was provided by the Union ministry of culture. Gurgaon-based architect Jyothi Rath has designed the building that houses artefacts collected mostly from private donors.

"When I was a child, I had driven some of the vehicles that have been put on display here now. It is very easy to appreciate, but very difficult to get this kind of collection at one place. This is the first of its kind in the country and I congratulate Tarun Thakral for it," said Hooda, who found the tour of the museum "fascinating".

The CM spent over an hour looking at the collection.

In turn a proud Thakral, chief operating officer of Le Meridien New Delhi, said, "I have just tried to give something back to the community. I hope this museum becomes a sustainable way for people to look at the past and draw a suitable vantage to look at the present. I chose this place, which is a bit removed from the hustle bustle of Delhi and Gurgaon, for two reasons: firstly, the place will become a getaway from the daily grind of the cities and secondly, the cost of land was prohibitive in Delhi and Gurgaon."

As of now the museum collection is a mix of pre-modern and the modern: one can find everything from howdahs, bullock carts, palanquins and a boat that used to ply in the Yamuna to motorized vehicles of different makes and kinds, including classics as a 1924 Ford, a 1932 Chevrolet, a 1935 Buick. Apart from them there are vintage scooters, and rural Indian contraptions such as chakda and phatphat.

"My fascination with vintage cars is quite old and I started with the 1932 Chevrolet that you can see on display here. I have collected a lot of cars, but many collectors too have contributed to make this dream come true. Interestingly, I got a number of items from the kabadiwallahs (scrap dealers)," said Thakral.

There is also a 1946 Piper aircraft, and transport toys from the 1920s to the 1970s displayed at the museum.


To make it into a complete place for families to visit, the museum also has a rich restaurant. The cost of entry ticket to the place has been priced at Rs. 300 for adults and Rs. 150 for children. "The rate will be flat for both Indians and foreigners and we hope to attract the latter in large numbers," Thakral added.

## WOMEN

HINDU, MAR 10, 2014

75 p.c. of working women have health problems: survey

AFSHAN YASMEEN



**HAZARDS OF MULTI-TASKING**

**The survey** titled 'Multi-tasking seriously affecting corporate women's health' was conducted by ASSOCHAM to mark International Women's Day

**It was held in** Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, and Pune

**75 per cent** of the total sample size of 2,800 corporate women employees from 120 companies across 11 broad sectors had one or the other health problem

**78 per cent** of the sample size suffered from lifestyle, chronic and acute ailments. These

included obesity, depression, chronic backache, diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, heart and kidney diseases

**About 42 per cent** of the sample size was found to be suffering from lifestyle diseases such as backache, obesity, depression, diabetes, hyper-tension, and heart ailments

**Fear of losing jobs** in an environment of economic slowdown and low employment generation is making things worse for working women

**A majority** of women suffering from such ailments do not get to visit the doctor

Striking the right balance between work and home has always been a challenge for working women.

A survey now finds that this daily “multi-tasking” is taking a toll on their health. The worst part is most of the affected women are in the 32 to 58 age group.

The survey titled ‘Multi-tasking seriously affecting corporate women’s health’ was conducted by the Associated Chamber of Commerce and Industry to mark International Women's Day on March 8.

The survey found that 75 per cent of the total sample size of 2,800 corporate women employees from 120 companies across 11 broad sectors had one or the other health problem.

The survey covered all levels of hierarchy and the problem was found to be prevailing across all levels of seniority and grades. It was conducted in Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, and Pune.

According to a press release, the study found that 78 per cent of the sample size suffered from lifestyle, chronic and acute ailments.

These included obesity, depression, chronic backache, diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, heart and kidney diseases.

“Those in the younger age group manage to cope up but are in a danger of developing problems,” the release said.

About 42 per cent of the sample size was found to be suffering from lifestyle diseases such as backache, obesity, depression, diabetes, hyper-tension, and heart ailments.

While 22 per cent were reported to be suffering from chronic diseases, 14 per cent had acute ailments.

“A majority of the respondents said while the jobs were demanding, fear of losing them in an environment of economic slowdown and low employment generation was making things worse,” the release said.

The worst part is that a majority of them do not get to visit the doctor.

The reasons vary from a busy schedule to staying in denial mode, and some of them take to home remedies.

Increasing medical costs

Increasing medical costs also add to the problem, particularly for those at the lower strata of jobs, the release added.

Most of those affected are in the 32 to 58 age group

TIMES OF INDIA, MAR 10, 2014

**India will take around 56 years to achieve female youth literacy: Report**

[Manash Pratim Gohain](#)

NEW DELHI: Literacy is still a distant dream for vulnerable young women. Going at the present pace of development, India will take at least another 56 years to achieve female youth literacy.

A serious gender imbalance in global education has left over 100 million young women in low and lower middle income countries unable to read a single sentence, and will prevent half of the 31 million girls out of school from ever enrolling. These are among the main findings of the gender summary, which analyses data from the [Unesco Education for All Global Monitoring Report](#).

As per the South-West Asia factsheet of the report, young people who have spent just a few years in school do not develop literacy skills and in some cases even completing primary school is not always a guarantee for literacy. The report cited the example of India where after completing up to four years of school, 90% emerge illiterate and after five to six years in school, around 30% still emerge illiterate.

Poor women are the most vulnerable, with two out of three of them in South and West Asia who cannot read are from this category. While poorest young females in Bhutan are not projected to achieve universal literacy until 2083, Pakistan will not reach the target until the 22nd Century. India is no better, projected to meet the target between 2070 and 2080.

The new summary, launched in partnership with the [United Nations Girls Education Initiative](#), calls for equity to be at the forefront of new global development goals after 2015, so that every child has an equal chance of learning through quality education.

Despite some progress, in 2011, only 60% of countries had achieved parity in primary education and only 38% of countries had achieved parity in secondary education. Among low income countries, just 20% had achieved gender parity at the primary level, 10% at the lower secondary level and 8% at the upper secondary level.

It is projected that only 70% of countries will have achieved parity in primary education by 2015, and 56% will have achieved parity in lower secondary education. Unless improvements are made, the poorest girls will achieve universal primary completion 60 years later than the richest boys.

"It is simply intolerable that girls are being left behind. For poor girls, education is one of the most powerful routes to a better future, helping them escape from a vicious cycle of poverty," said Irina Bokova, director general, Unesco.

DECCAN HERALD, MAR 10, 2014

### **60 pc women drop career in middle: Experts**

**Notwithstanding the upsurge of debates and measures to promote gender equality in workplace, experts say around 60 per cent of the women drop their career in the middle.**

At the entry level, most organisations do well in hiring and training women, but the struggle with retention begins when women reach mid-managerial levels. Greater gender balance in the workplace helps companies to improve their organisational performance, operational results and overall market status.

"Some of the factors that companies can adopt in order to bring in more women into their payrolls are by maintaining a better work-life balance for female employees and by mentoring and grooming them for bigger projects and promotions," Ritu Mehrotra, VP Global HR and Talent Management of Bristlecone, a Mahindra Group Company said. According to GlobalHunt MD Sunil Goel "more than 60-70 per cent of the women drop their career at mid, due to their personal and family liabilities or been not given a adequate support and space within the organisation to grow further."

Experts are of the opinion that these trained women are valuable assets to a company and they need to see how to retain them, sometime even go the extra mile and ensure that all the investment made on the women employees is realised.

According to PwC India Consulting leader Satyavati Berera "organisations need to have more pro-gender diversity policies and ensure equal participation of women and men in decision making process at all levels."

Gender equality at the workplace can help in propagating a sense of equality in society as well, experts said, adding that companies today are carrying out various innovative initiatives that empowers women to secure a better future for themselves.

"Tata Steel believes that empowerment of women ultimately benefits society at large," a company spokesperson said, adding that the company has an initiative called Tejaswini, that trains women for jobs which were earlier considered suitable for 'men only'.

"To achieve sustainable change, a focus on women in leadership is not enough," PricewaterhouseCoopers International Global Diversity and Inclusion Leader Agnes Hussherr said, added that companies must understand how to attract, develop, and retain "millennial women".

According to a Grant Thornton research report, the representation of Indian women in senior company positions remains a cause of concern at 14 per cent, below the global average which was around 24 per cent.

Moreover, in an average year, 13 per cent of the graduates that Indian businesses hire are women, while the corresponding global figure is 21 per cent.

HINDUSTAN TIMES, MAR 12, 2014

**'181' is the new 4am friend of city women**

**Neha Pushkarna**

Started as a helpline for women facing violence, 181 has now become a "4am friend" for women in Delhi.

There are nearly 20,000 women who dial up 181 regularly to share their problems and discuss ways to sort them out. And it's not just assault or crime that women speak up against.

In its one-year run since December 2012, several girls have called up at the helpline when their parents didn't let them go to school. Housewives and working women seek help when different departments fail to deliver services on time. Delhi government sources say 181 has also received calls from women not sure of how to deal with their husbands who don't care enough.



“There are 40,000 live cases that we are handling currently. Though we had started only as a helpline that would report matters to the police, we have now expanded our role and help rehabilitate women and make their lives better,” said an official at the 181 service.

A teenager called up the helpline for a couple of months before she finally confided in a counsellor that she was allegedly being sexually assaulted by her father.

She talked to us for several months before she finally opened up. The police rescued her and now we are trying to put her and her siblings in a hostel,” the official said. A few months ago, a housewife from Seelampur called up to complain that the gas service in her area hasn’t sent her a cylinder despite three reminders.

“When we told her we couldn’t take up her case, she calmly said to us that it would certainly become our case once her husband came back and beat her to see nothing cooked to eat,” the official said. The helpline immediately intervened and the woman called back after 10 minutes that the gas service was sending a cylinder.

Besides over 14,000 cases of obscene calls and 11,989 cases of domestic violence, the helpline has handled 52 health-related cases, 36 cases involving DTC buses and nine education-related cases between December 31, 2012 and December 31, 2013. There have also been 377 cases related to property dispute.

181 helpline runs 24X7 with staff strength of 21. There are at least eight people working in each shift. Besides the police, it keeps the numbers of all government agencies handy for providing immediate relief.

BUSINESS LINE, MAR 12, 2014

### **Women on board**

The answer is not reservation but HR policies that cater to the specific needs of women  
The ascent of a few bright women to top posts in large Indian banks and financial firms gives the impression that India Inc is gender-neutral when it comes to providing career opportunities. But the truth is that women occupying top management positions in Indian firms are a rarity. Of the 10,000-odd directors who sit on the boards of NSE-listed companies, it is estimated that only 5 per cent are women. As for the Nifty companies, the figure is 7 per cent.

Policymakers are now seeking to remedy this problem by specifying a quota for women directors on corporate boards. In its new corporate governance guidelines, the Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has mandated that all listed companies should have at least one woman director on their board by October 1 this year. With nearly a thousand board seats required to be filled over the next seven months, companies are scrambling for women directors; yet with relatively few women in professional senior management roles, qualified candidates are proving hard to find. As SEBI does not require the woman director to be independent, the worry, from a governance perspective, is that these positions may come to be manned by figurehead directors — wives, daughters or relatives of promoters. This would defeat the very purpose of the rule, which is to usher

in greater independence in decision-making by a more diverse and accountable board. The other problem with this reservation is that it severely undermines the achievements of the women leaders who do make it to board positions purely on merit.

Instead of top-down quotas from the regulator, what is needed is a corporate ecosystem that allows more women managers to rise to senior management positions on merit. Now, many large firms in India have a fair representation of women at the lower echelons, but the problem is that many women opt out as they reach middle management roles. Women usually take mid-career breaks, if they lack support systems at home, to bring up children or take care of the elderly. International studies have also found that they usually lack active mentors or networks within the organisation. This suggests that if companies are serious about elevating more women to top jobs, they need to go beyond current fire-fighting mechanisms such as anti-sexual harassment policies and car drops for women employees. Their HR policies need to be customised to the specific needs of women; SBI's recent move to offer women employees two-year 'family leave' for child-care, is an instance. Support infrastructure such as childcare facilities at the workplace, flexible work hours that focus on deliveries and sensitising the workforce to the need for gender diversity, are also critical to ensure that women have fair shot at making it to the top.

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